

**Board of Trustees**  
**Suffolk County Department of Parks,**  
**Recreation and Conservation**  
**Minutes of February 17, 2005 at Meadow Edge, West Sayville**

**BOARD MEMBERS  
PRESENT:**

Charles Bender	Member of the Board
Alexander McKay	Chairman, Town of Huntington
Ray Corwin	Trustee, Member at Large
John Fritz	Trustee, Town of Babylon
Matthew Kruger	Vice Chairman, Town of Smithtown
Thomas McCaffery	Trustee, Town of Southold
Jay Miller	Trustee, Town of Islip
Todd Stebbins	Member of the Board

**ABSENT:**

Aurelio Colina	Trustee, Town of Southampton
Chris Drake	Trustee, Town of Shelter Island
Gary Olsen	Trustee, Town of Brookhaven
Vacancy	Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Dick White	Trustee, Town of East Hampton

**PARKS DEPARTMENT:**

Tracey Bellone	Deputy Commissioner
William Sickles	Sr. Superintendent
Colleen Hofmeister	Contracts Manager
Tom Hroncich	Intergovernmental Relations Coordinator
Nick Gibbons	Sr. Environmental Analyst
Teri Kopp	Secretary to the Commissioner
Mary Morabito	Principal Auditor

**GUESTS:**

Hon. Peter Casserly	Trustee, Village of Amityville
Lauretta Fischer	Principal Planner
Janet Longo	Assistant to Director of Real Estate
Jennifer Kohn	Assistant County Attorney
Varughese George	Principal Health Engineer Health Services / Ecology

### **PUBLIC PORTION:**

Chairman McKay opened the meeting at approximately 1 p.m. and recognized Peter Casserly, Trustee for Village of Amityville, who is presenting a proposal for improvements to **Nautical Park in the Village of Amityville**. Nautical Park was acquired under the Active Greenways Program in which the County purchased the property and the Town operates and maintains the property. The Park (a focal point in the Village) consists of 5 parcels in the Village of Amityville and is located on the southeast corner of Ocean Avenue and Montauk Highway, Merrick Road on the Amityville River. Mr. Casserly provided the Parks Trustees with the following information:

- Park first conceived in 1997
- Acquisition includes 5 parcels, 3 of which had multifamily residences. One house had a boat canvas facility and apartment above it and the other house was a 2 family house with a barn in the back, (house being retained to be converted to a senior citizen center and barn as a nautical museum.)
- 5th parcel still remains to be acquired shortly
- Survey and archeological study completed
- Demolition costs of \$96,000 with all work done through competitive bid - all necessary permits obtained
- New dock
- \$434,000 bid out - 70 percent complete
- Design of Park includes stockade and wrought iron fencing, natural stone piers every 30 or 40 feet with colonial lighting on piers
- Walkway using brick paving and architectural design in middle
- Trellis/Stationary Boat for aesthetics
- Gravel used in pathways – crush bluestone - to deter skateboard use
- Gazebo Band shell
- Sprinkler systems on open lawn area
- Benches/memorials throughout the Park
- Specimen trees to restore scale to land
- Existing large maple trees and oaks saved
- Restoration of flagpole
- \$850,000 worth of improvements to date-includes grants and other monies received
- Small parking lot meeting handicapped standards
- Curbing along Montauk Highway replaced

Lauretta Fischer further explained that 4 parcels already owned by the County and fifth parcel is in the acquisition process. The Town is asking for additional \$250,000 for improvements. She also explained that under Greenways Active Recreation, the Trustees were originally required to review and make recommendations to the Legislature but that it never happened. Trustee Fritz visited the site and confirmed the work is well underway and said design is very impressive. Trustee Fritz motioned to approve \$250,000 worth of improvements as stated in the site plan for Nautical Park in the Village of Amityville. Trustee Corwin seconded and motion passed 7-0-0.

### **ADOPTION OF JANUARY 20, 2005 MINUTES:**

Deputy Commissioner Bellone corrected that she was absent at the January 20th meeting. Chairman McKay, page 5 first paragraph, corrected as "Wednesday, February 16, 2005..."

Trustee Stebbins motioned to approve January 20, 2005 minutes as amended. Vice Chairman Kruger seconded and motion carried 7-0-0.

Chairman McKay thanked Teri Kopp on behalf of all of the Trustees for her dedication and hard work provided to the Board of Trustees for the past several years.

#### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2005 MEETING SCHEDULE:**

Lauretta Fischer brought 3 dates to the Trustees' attention that present a possible conflict to the schedule. They are August 18, November 17 and December 15. The Environmental Legislative Committee also meets on those dates at 2 p.m. in Hauppauge. A vote to approve the schedule was deferred to the March meeting.

#### **APPROVAL OF CAPITAL BUDGET:**

Deputy Commissioner Bellone reported on the Capital Budget and explained four new items. She introduced Mary Morabito as the new head of the Accounting Division. Line 24 – Improvements to Newly Acquired Parkland/Open Space – funds will be used for general improvements to any newly acquired buildings that are part of any new acquisitions in the future. Line 25 – Renovations to the Historic Scully Estate. Deputy Commissioner stated that there are issues of lead and asbestos in the building and that part of the \$2 million can be used for restoration of the building. She also stated that Seatuck Environmental group is currently working with the County. Trustee Corwin reminded all that in 1998 when this project began, \$2 million was not a lot of money and now in 2004/ 2005, it is even worth less to accomplish all that is necessary for this Interpretive Educational Center to be up and running. Lauretta Fischer read from the resolution to reiterate what was contained in the law to further explain the allowed funding can go toward construction in order to open the Interpretive Center and that there is nothing precluding the County from using this \$2 million.

Line 26 – Historic Buildings Survey and Recommendations – Deputy Commissioner Bellone reported that Commissioner Foley added this funding to be used for a survey of all historic buildings to determine their historic designation and what repairs need to be made at each facility. Line 27 – Renovation of Southaven County Park Stables - there is an extensive amount of work to be done at this facility with this funding. Contracts Manager Colleen Hofmeister is working on the RFP for a concessionaire there.

Trustee Fritz asked about Item 7109 on the Capital Budget and does it affect any specific boat ramps? Bill Sickles answered that currently work is being done on existing ramps at Timberpoint West Marina and Northwest Harbor. Deputy Commissioner Bellone added that Legislator O'Leary wants to renovate and develop the Smith Point Marina for more community use. Trustee Bender confirmed that the Master Plan for the Smith Point Marina began years ago and included plans for a restaurant, bake shop etc. and this plan has recently resurfaced.

Chairman McKay asked about Line 1 and 2 in the Capital Budget. Line 1 refers to fencing and surveying County Parks and Line 5 is Improvements and Lighting at County Parks. Deputy Commissioner Bellone responded Line 1 is for general use items needed during the year and Line 5 is for paving projects. Chairman McKay asked about Line 7 – Restoration of West Neck Farm and Coindre Hall. He brought up Sagamore Rowing Association and its use of the boathouse in Huntington. Chairman McKay spoke of the popularity of this sport and also suggested that perhaps a statement expressing the groups desire to have a partnership with the Town and County in order to share expenses for renovation of the boathouse, yet still providing that the Rowing Association and the Schools can continue to use this facility, should be made part of the narrative for this budget line. Deputy Commissioner Bellone stated that the line is to be used for the facility at large not just the boathouse however, the County had met with Legislator Cooper's office recently to discuss whether such a partnership could be made to restore the boathouse and eliminate the need to build a new boathouse adjacent to the existing one using available

funds. Specific details on stabilizing this building and future enlarging the building was discussed and funding that would have been used for a new facility could be used to restore the existing boathouse. When all terms are worked out, an agreement will be created.

Trustee Corwin motioned to approve the Capital Budget as presented today. Seconded by Trustee Fritz. Motion carried 7-0-0.

#### **COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:**

\_ Deputy Commissioner Bellone reported on **Trap and Skeet** – the Department is currently working on the RFP for a concessionaire. The Town of Brookhaven did not grant an exemption to the County from their noise ordinance affecting this facility. However, the project is still moving forward using limited funding to abate noise. Trustee Miller asked if the Department considered an alternate site like Shinnecock, where “people could shoot at their heart's content without neighbors being around.” Deputy Commissioner Bellone said alternates were not considered yet. Trustee Miller asked “You are still going to fight it? (The County Attorney agrees that Town of Brookhaven has jurisdiction.) Deputy Commissioner said the RFP is still moving forward. Trustee Miller could not believe there would be anyone who would become the concessionaire (there) and buy into a lawsuit – he felt this was just a waste of time.

Trustee Fritz added that he had in the past brought up the area of Gabreski Airport as an alternate site, but learned nothing is available out there.

Rental Housing Appraisals– Deputy Commissioner reported that the appraisal work by the Department of Real Estate has been completed on the County's 46 units. The department is beginning to receive information on each unit in batches. Parks will review each appraisal and submit to the Legislature any necessary requests for reduction with relation to fair market value rates and other variables. Parks will also establish a standard rate policy that will be brought to the Board when completed.

ATV Task Force – Commissioner Foley as Chairman of the committee had the first meeting yesterday in Hauppauge. The Task Force discussed goals and objectives and will meet again in March.

#### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:**

Scully Estate – Parks staff met with staff from DPW and Seatuck Environmental Group. Seatuck will be providing a building use plan created by their architect whom the Parks Historic Services Division approved. Parks will bring this information to the Trustees when available.

Audit Report– Chairman McKay expressed concern over the large amount of recommendations contained in the audit report. Deputy Commissioner Bellone described the many steps the Department is undertaking in tackling the work:

- Requested additional parks staff for accounting division
- Requested additional parks staff for money handling
- Received approval to purchase new parks reservation system
- Purchased new drop safes
- Hired an auditor for contracts division
- Frequent site visits being done

Chairman McKay asked if the contracts division and/or concessionaires were also being audited. Contracts Manager Hofmeister said no, however, hiring an auditor has been a small step in the

right direction.

Trustee Miller expressed deep concern as a steward of the County and about the length of time that it took for the department to bring these types of problems to the Trustees as stated in the audit report. Further, he asked Deputy Commissioner Bellone what the Trustees could do to help the department whether it be funding, new staff or if they (Trustees) are needed to lobby the Legislature for more specific needs. Deputy Commissioner Bellone stated that while the report was dated January 2004, the department actually received it in September 2004 and it was brought to the Trustees at the October 2004 meeting. Trustee Miller said the report states \$8 million accounted revenue with 90 percent misappropriation and that this is a "real eye opener!" He further questioned what type of personnel was hired now to handle monies in the department. Questions of receipts, tape receipts, actual monies collected, cash registers etc. were also discussed. In response, Deputy Commissioner Bellone said while she understands Trustee Miller's concerns, she would only ask his patience while she and Commissioner Foley hire the necessary personnel to tackle the problems and assured him the Trustees will be provided updates on progress. Trustee Miller asked about the process the department goes through in hiring specific titles and wanted to know why it takes so long. The process of hiring off civil services lists was discussed and the possibility of emergency personnel to be hired for short-term solutions was also discussed.

Trustee Bender added that the audit report spurred a lot of emotion from the Legislature regarding new positions and funding for a new computer reservation system that, he feels, will be a Godsend. Deputy Commissioner Bellone said the new system would replace the current cash registers. Further, the department has researched many types of software through extensive demonstrations and chose the best successful system. Trustee Miller asked Assistant County Attorney Kohn if her office would enforce any contracted agencies not in compliance. Ms. Kohn answered that the County Attorney would enforce a contract at the request of the department.

Long Island North Shore Heritage Trail Master Plan– Chairman McKay spoke of a meeting recently in which Lance Mallamo of the Vanderbilt Museum along with Richard Martin of the Parks department is involved with this group in this bi-county and NYS Parks effort. A Master Plan is being developed that provides public trails that will reach from points in Nassau County out to Orient Point, encompassing a huge area. Trails will include signage, gazebos, and kiosks with maps for tourists.

#### **OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS:**

\_ Trustee Fritz asked about the deed for **Westhampton Dunes**. Assistant County Attorney Kohn said she learned of a boundary agreement that showed land, approximately 127 feet south of Dune Road that belongs to New York State. Superintendent Sickles said Southampton Trustees have a right of access east and west along the Barrier Beach, which goes back to the Donegan Patent, which was upheld by the NYS Supreme Court which allows the Town to exercise its rights. Jennifer Kohn said there is a reference to this in the legal document, which says it is subject to any rights that the Southampton Trustees have. The bottom line is that New York State has jurisdiction of outer beach, not Suffolk County below the 127 feet and that the Town owns access. Bill Sickles added that there are 6 public access points consisting of walkways south of Dune Road and within the Village of Westhampton Beach.

Trustee Fritz asked about public hearings regarding the **fishing pier** at Smith Point and his understanding that it was the subject of recent public hearings. Nick Gibbons responded that the results of those hearings and/or comments from them have not yet been received.

Plover season - Nick expressed concern that seasonal employees are hard to get any earlier than

the middle of May when school is out. The department will be watching the plovers, as they will begin to arrive in the next few weeks.

Trustee Corwin thanked Teri Kopp for her outstanding service to the Board of Trustees and wished her well in the future. Also, **Congratulations** to Nick Gibbons on the arrival of his new baby girl.

**DATE AND LOCATION OF THE NEXT MEETING:**

The location of the March 16, 2005 meeting will be at Meadow Edge in West Sayville. Vice Chairman Kruger motioned to adjourn meeting. Trustee Stebbins seconded and meeting was adjourned.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Teri Kopp.